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COMMUNIST POSITION IN THE KOREAN TRUCE TALKS

Peiping Radio on 12 July denounced in detail the joint Rhee-Robertson statement of the same date. The lengthy commentary, attributed to a Chinese correspondent at Panmunjom, asserted that "Rhee still gives no assurance that his government and army will observe the Korean armistice agreement" and that Rhee and Robertson in fact agreed on American support of Rhee in a military operation against North Korea.

The broadcast quotes Rhee's reported remark to a Scripps-Howard correspondent, following the release of the joint statement, that he "would not accept an armistice" but had merely agreed not to obstruct one for 90 days. It concludes that the American-South Korean "understanding" is to "allow Rhee a free hand to undermine the truce after 90 days."

Further, the commentary notes the lack of reference to the released prisoners in the joint statement, and objects to the agreement to release in South Korea those Korean prisoners who continue to resist repatriation after Communist "explanations" to them.

Finally, the correspondent cites South Korean officials as believing that the prospective American-South Korean security pact will mean American support of Rhee in a northward drive, and interprets other American-South Korean agreements noted in the joint statement as additional evidence of an American intention to build up South Korean forces for such an operation.

Although the Communists still appear to desire a Korean truce, this broadcast and others from Peiping Radio in the past three days suggest that they will not sign a truce unless given stronger assurances that the UN Command will attempt to implement a truce whether or not the terms are acceptable to Rhee. Specifically, the propaganda suggests that the Communists will demand in the current meetings at Panmunjom that the UN Command (1) make a serious effort to recover the released prisoners,

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(2) ensure against further releases, (3) adhere to the 8 June agreement on the disposition of prisoners unwilling to be repatriated, (4) ensure that South Korean forces will observe a cease-fire and withdraw from the demilitarized zone, and (5) guarantee the safety of neutral nations personnel supervising a truce and handling the prisoners, Indian troops guarding the prisoners, and Communist "explanations" personnel.

The Communists are also expected to demand assurances in the Panmunjom meetings or through other channels, that the United States is not committed to resume hostilities if no early agreement is reached on the major agenda questions in the political conference, and that the United States will not support Rhee in a South Korean military operation against North Korea at the end of 90 days or thereafter.

It is still not clear whether the Communists desire a truce to be peacefully implemented or would prefer an American-South Korean conflict on its implementation. The Communists could be expected in either case to insist, as they have insisted, on assurances regarding implementation. A reliable indication of their preference may be provided shortly in their position on the prisoner issue. Persistence in demanding recovery of all of the released prisoners would indicate a preference for an American-South Korean conflict.

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